

Testimony of Tremaine Phillips & Marci Baranski
Michigan Student Sustainability Coalition

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We want:

- **5% annual energy efficiency increases between now and 2015.**
- **Renewable energy portfolio standard (RPS) of 30% by 2030.**
- **An integrated resource planning that will take into account Michigan's abundant renewable energy resources and energy efficiency opportunities before claiming that new coal and nuclear plants are necessary.**

My name is Tremaine Phillips, and I am a senior at the Michigan State University. I am joined today by the by several other current students and alumni from Michigan State University. And I am Marci Baranski, a junior at Michigan State University. We are leaders representing the Michigan Student Sustainability Coalition, an organization of more than 300 students from 21 different colleges and universities throughout this state.

As a college senior, I have spent a great deal of time contemplating where I will go and what will I do once I graduate. I have lived in Michigan the majority of my life and I am proud to say that I am a Michigander. The Michigan that I have grown to love, however, is changing rapidly in the face of the related crises of climate change and economic stagnation.

Climate scientists tell us we need to reduce CO2 emissions 80% by 2050 if we are to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Such pronouncements make the need for a strong RPS and energy efficiency standards unequivocal. These initiatives also present an opportunity to rejuvenate Michigan's economy in ways unseen since the days of Henry Ford.

Green jobs are the kind that can't be outsourced, and they can benefit current college students and society's least advantaged. It has been estimated that doubling the energy efficiency in Michigan can bring 9,000 new jobs and \$340 million in new wage income to this state by 2013¹

In addition, a strong RPS standard and improved energy efficiency can significantly alleviate one of Michigan's most crippling economic burdens; the \$20 billion we spend every year on imported fossil fuels. These fuels are not only expensive, but unhealthy-releasing toxins such as mercury into our ecosystem and our communities.

Youth throughout the state and the nation demand that strong, immediate action be taken to secure our climate's future and the national movement is only getting stronger. Last

¹ John Laitner and Martin Kushler, "More Jobs and Greater Total Wage Income: The Economic Benefits of an Efficiency-Led Clean Energy Strategy to Meet Growing Electricity Needs in Michigan," American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy," November 2007.

month 6,000 of us convened in Washington DC for Power Shift, the first youth national climate change summit. 300 of these students were from Michigan, making us the third most represented state at the conference. What we brought back was not only energy within ourselves- but energy to revitalize Michigan's economy by ending our reliance on fossil fuels.

We believe that Michigan has the infrastructure to build a clean energy future- one which we will inherit. Michigan has the chance to become a leader in energy efficiency and renewable energy, and we're here to tell you that students across the state are in support. I see my fellow students planning our futures around sustainable jobs, ones which we are asking you to help create today. We also hope that the Michigan we and our children inherit will not be dramatically different than what we grew up in- I cannot imagine my home of Traverse City without its beautiful snow-covered ski hills, crystal clear bays and lakes, and famous cherry orchards. That is why we are here today- to urge you to help revitalize Michigan's economy and take a strong stance against wasteful energy practices and climate change. We cannot sit back any longer- the time for new policy is now.